

MYSTERIOUS BANK ROBBERY SOLVED

Perpetrators of Daring Crime Now Serving Terms Behind Prison Bars.

WOMAN CAUSES ARREST OF THE GUILTY MEN

Divorced and Neglected Wife of Accessory to Deed Unearths Evidence Which Leads to Their Punishment—How National Institution at Lima, O., Was Plundered of Over \$18,000 Seven Years Ago—Officers Long Suspected of Taking Money.

Seven years ago the American national bank at Lima, O., was robbed of \$18,232, the money having been taken from the vaults sometime between Saturday night and Monday morning, but just when and by whom was unknown until the last few weeks. Now, Elijah Bowsheer, the trusted janitor of the bank at the time of the robbery, and Thomas K. Wilkins, an insurance agent at Lima, are behind prison walls in the penitentiary at Columbus, O., serving out sentences of seven and five years respectively, for the crime, the former as principal and the latter as accessory, both convicted on pleas of guilty in open court and sentenced without a trial.

The story of the robbery and the final detection of the guilty reads like fiction. It is more interesting, because true, than any of the novels ever written by "Old Sleuth," the famous detective author.

Discovery of Robbery.
The fact that the bank had evidently been robbed was first made known to the cashier, Gus Kalb, by Janitor Bowsheer on the morning of Monday, December 26, 1898, then a holiday because Christmas of that year fell on Sunday. He went to the home of the cashier and informed him that he had found the door of the bank vault open.

An investigation followed and the robbery was discovered. The only suspicious fact, however, when Cashier Kalb entered the bank that forenoon, was that the outer vault door was open. The inner door was bolted securely, the time lock apparently not having been tampered with and the mechanism of all the combination locks working properly. How had the robbers secured an entrance? This was a mystery that it has taken seven years to unravel.

Cashier Kalb, with the vice president of the bank, N. L. Michael, had locked the vault doors and the safes the Saturday night before the discovery of the robbery, setting the time lock to run down on Monday noon, apparently defying an entrance until then.

When the cashier pulled the outer vault door open on that fateful Monday morning nothing within indicated that the other locks had been manipu-

If not the work of skilled professional burglars, the robbery must, so it was reasoned, have been done by the bank officers, and during all these years the cashier and vice president, Mr. Kalb and Mr. Michael, have been under the ban of suspicion. Their names, spotless before, were tarnished unjustly with the crime of theft.

Officers Suspected of Crime.
Immediately after the robbery the Pinkerton agency and a score of private detectives, some of them paid and others influenced by the large rewards offered, went to work on the case. Following the clue that it was the bank officers that did it, Cashier Kalb and Vice President Michael were arrested and indicted by the grand jury.

While the cases against them were afterwards dismissed because of lack of evidence, they were believed by many to be guilty.

Finally Bowsheer, the janitor, was arrested. Nothing, however, could be proven against him and he was released and the Lima bank robbery continued a mystery that baffled solution on the part of the best detective talent of the country.

Arrest Due to Woman.
It remained for a woman, neglected, divorced and scorned—refused the money that, in part, had quieted her tongue—to unearth the evidence that led to the arrest of the guilty party.

Janitor Bowsheer and her husband, Thomas K. Wilkins, an accomplice in the crime. This woman was the divorced wife of Wilkins. Ten years ago she was a society woman at Lima, the daughter of a leading railroad official.

She was pretty and accomplished and, until some years after her marriage to Wilkins, did not know what want was. Wilkins was the son of a real estate dealer at Lima, a man of considerable wealth, and at the time of their marriage had but just been admitted to the practice of law and had a promising future.

During the first few years of their married life the young couple lived in luxury in one of the handsomest residences in Lima. But, as they do in so many married lives, the days of neglect and abuse came and then Mrs. Wilkins sued for and obtained a divorce. Then, denied the payment of

sher had frequently told Wilkins what an easy matter it would be for him to rob the bank.

What to do with the money after he had secured it, to avoid suspicion, bothered him, and for its investment and handling he took Wilkins into his confidence. On the morning after the robbery, Mrs. Wilkins related, her husband came home with his pockets stuffed with money, several thousands of dollars in bills of different denominations and gold coin. He was somewhat under the influence of liquor at the time and did not know where to hide the money.

"Well, Lige has done the job," he said, "and this is my share of it."

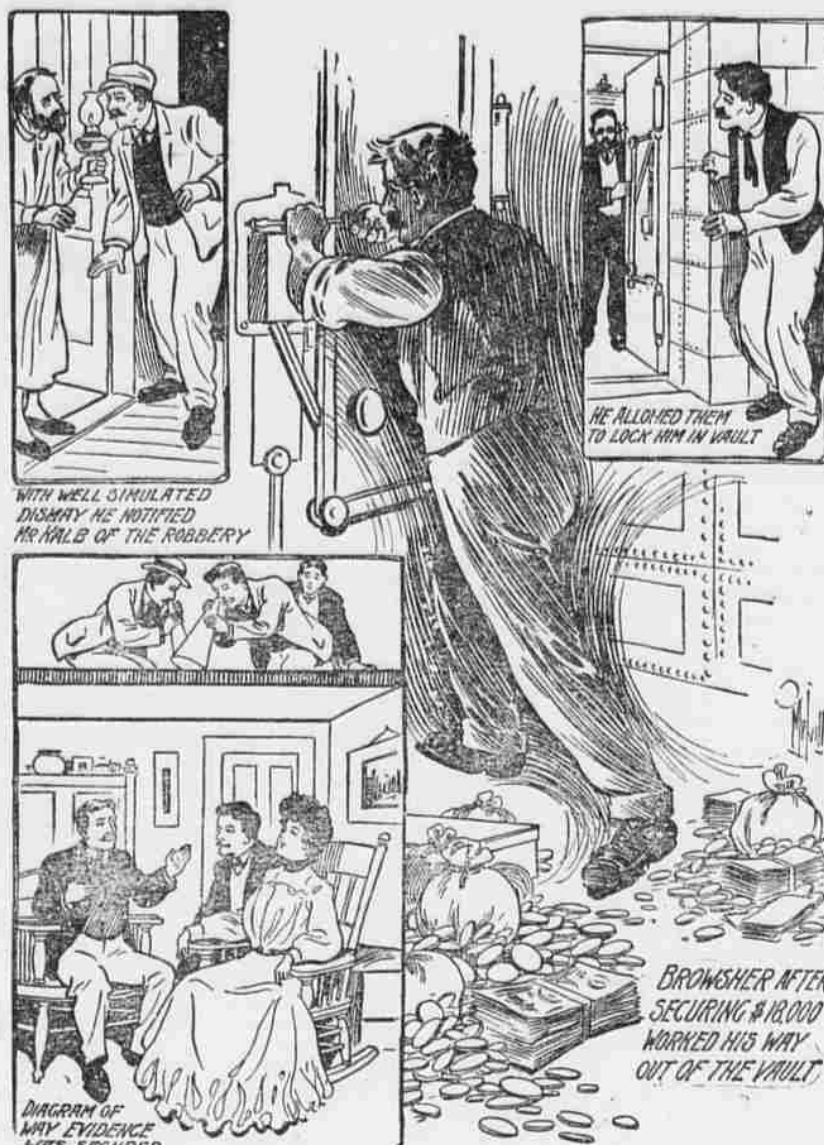
Finally the money was hidden in a torn sofa at their home, and from this place it was taken as each needed it, from time to time—a fortune in their

told the story of how he had taken the money from the bank vault.

He had been around so long as janitor that he had learned much about the mechanism of the vault locks. He was satisfied that he could allow himself to be locked in the vault and then work himself out again.

This is what he did on the night of the robbery, using as his tools only an ordinary wrench and a screwdriver of a common kind. When Cashier Kalb and Vice President Michael were preparing that night to close up the bank Bowsheer slipped into the vault unobserved and was locked in. By unfasting thumbscrews and bolts to the inner and outer doors he worked his way to the bank office again within a few moments after the officers left it.

With the combination of the inside safe he secured the money, then, fixing



possession, and yet it did not bring them happiness.

In a few years the money was all gone. Finally, for neglect and cruelty, she obtained a divorce from him, leaving soon afterward to reside with an uncle near Fort Wayne, Ind.

Within a few months Wilkins followed her and for a time their differences were patched up and they lived together, only to be separated again by his dissipation.

He returned to Lima. Thither she followed him, vainly endeavoring to get money for her support. It was then the blow was struck that made her resolve to tell all.

Plan to Secure Evidence.

The story she told Deputy Sheriff Freet, while presenting a strong case, lacked the convincing proof necessary to secure conviction. The deputy sheriff reported the matter to William Klinger, the prosecuting attorney of the county, and it was then the plan was formed to entrap Bowsheer and Wilkins and secure evidence that would convict them on their own testimony, and in this act of the drama Mrs. Wilkins was to play the star part.

With the knowledge she possessed, it was not a hard matter for her to arrange a meeting with the two implicated men. The meeting was held in a house at Lima which she was temporarily making her home. It was fixed up previously by the officers for the meeting and arranged so that they could hear the entire conversation between the three without being seen.

It was a story and a half house. A hole was cut through the ceiling above the room in which the meeting was held, the lath and plastering being removed, but leaving the paper on. This was, however, perforated with small holes so as to allow the sounds from below to come through. Located in this garret, one could hear a conversation held in the room below.

In this garret previous to the meeting of Mrs. Wilkins with Wilkins and Bowsheer three men were concealed. Deputy Sheriff Freet, Walter M. Scott, the court stenographer, and a private detective. Each of them had megaphones. They could hear distinctly the slightest whisper, and the court stenographer could transcribe every word of the conversation.

Immediately after the arrival of Wilkins and Bowsheer, Mrs. Wilkins renewed her plea to Wilkins for his payment of the monthly alimony allowed her by the court in the divorce proceedings. Both men were given to understand that this must be paid.

Then began a discussion between Bowsheer and Wilkins as to the abilities of each to pay and what they had done with the stolen money.

How Robbery Was Executed.

At last the payments of the alimony seemed to be arranged by Bowsheer agreeing to fix it, and then Mrs. Wilkins, for the benefit of the auditors in the garret above, guided the conversation into a narration of how the robbery was planned and executed.

"Tell us, Lige," she said, "how you did the job at the bank. I have often wanted to know." And then Bowsheer

the vault doors and leaving the outer one ajar, he had the scheme fixed to fasten suspicion on the bank officers.

This was the story he told, given here in substance only. Every word of it, with the entire conversation between him and Wilkins and his wife, was taken down by the stenographer in the garret above and convincing evidence of the guilt of the two men was fixed.

Their arrest followed. For a few days each denied his guilt. Finally, seeing the web so closely woven about him, Bowsheer confessed and, going with the prosecuting attorney and the sheriff to the bank, showed them just how he had committed the robbery.

He allowed himself to be locked in the vault, the combination locks to both doors and the time lock being set, and in eight minutes he had worked himself out.

Guilty Men Sent to Jail.

On the following day he appeared in court, pleaded guilty and received his sentence. Wilkins held out for a few days longer and then confessed to having received part of the stolen money. By reason of her having turned state's evidence, no action was brought against Mrs. Wilkins.

Bowsheer has some real estate, part of it being in his wife's name. She, it seems, until his arrest, knew nothing of his guilt in regard to the robbery. Not long after it occurred Bowsheer invested in Ohio oil lands.

They proved profitable and his prosperity and land holdings were thus explained, diverting suspicion of his guilt. It is believed at Lima that he has money hidden and that he also has investments in such a shape as not to be reached by law.

He was never extravagant in his spendings and since the bank robbery has been industrious. He will serve his term in prison and then be a free man to get what enjoyment he can, with a guilty conscience, out of his stolen wealth. Possibly, long before his sentence expires he will make restitution to the bank of the money taken.

What money Wilkins received long since disappeared as a result of his dissipated habits. He will come out of prison, in five years, a poor man.

FRANK DILDINE.

Modern Animals.

"It is a great mistake to conclude that it is a law of nature that recent animals are all small and insignificant as compared with their representatives in the past," says a scientist. "That is simply not true. Recent horses are bigger than extinct ones, and much bigger than the three-toed and four-toed ancestors of horses. Recent elephants are as big as any that have existed, and much bigger than their early elephantine ancestors. There never has been any creature of any kind—mammal, reptile, bird or fish—in any geological period we know of so big as some of the existing whales."

His Favorite.

First Insurance Magnate—What is your favorite theatrical production? Second Insurance Magnate—"Other People's Money."—Baltimore American.



TREES ON PRAIRIES.

Bureau of Forestry Doing Good Work in This Direction—Better Methods in Use.

In the states of the middle west there is pressing need of more trees, both for wood and for windbreaks and shelter-belts. This need has been felt since the prairies were first settled, but the attempts made to supply it have, as a rule, fallen short of the benefits which might have been secured. The early planting was done chiefly for the sake of ornament or shade; the usefulness of the species for wood was seldom considered. In many cases, also, trees were planted outside of the range to which they were adapted, and on soil and in locations unfavorable to them. On the other hand, many valuable species were neglected.

Experience has now furnished the basis for better practice. Various kinds of trees can be grown in these regions which will serve just as well for protection and ornament as those which have been most used, and which at the same time will furnish valuable wood. For several years the forest service has been investigating this subject, says the Prairie Farmer, with results which are recognized throughout the prairie region as of great practical value. The work consists of field studies of the existing forest growth, both natural and planted, of its relation to soil and climatic conditions, and of the effect of various cultural methods.

In carrying on the work forest service field parties examine and make measurements of representative groves. From these measurements volume and yield tables are made which show the returns in cordwood, posts, stakes and lumber to be expected in a given time for each of the species studied. In addition to the measurements, the characteristics of growth and reproduction of the trees are noted, and valuable data on the natural distribution and adaptable planting range obtained.

The work in the eastern part of the two Dakotas, western Minnesota, Illinois, eastern Nebraska and western Kansas has been published, giving information concerning the species most suitable to the locality, and telling how and where to plant them. Bulletins of the same character covering other states are in preparation. This summer Iowa was studied, and later other states of the middle west, until the whole region is covered. Considerable tree planting has been done in some of these states, occasionally with complete success; but there have been many total failures, and many attempts successful only in part. As a rule, the lack of success was due to lack of knowledge how and what to plant. But these plantations, whether successful or not, provide valuable object lessons in respect to future planting.

GIRDLING GRAPEVINES.

What One Vineyardist Has to Say Regarding the Method as Used by Him.

I have girdled grapevines and seen it done for about 40 years, since I was a small boy; my father has done it nearly every year. The effect is not so marked, I think, if a large branch is girdled as when it is a small one. The theory of girdling, as I have it, is that the sap of the grape passes up through the wood and down between wood and bark. The proper time for the operation is from June 25 to July 5. Take, for instance, a branch like A, remove the bark clean or it will do no good. B shows bark re-



THE GIRDLED SECTIONS.

moved. On the principle I have suggested, continues the correspondent of the Rural New Yorker, while this separation is in force, the sap passes up and coming back cannot pass the bare wood, but from above and below it begins to make new wood, as shown in C and D. In five or six weeks it will look something like D, and be healed so that the sap will flow as usual. You will notice, however, that the vine above the cut is strikingly enlarged. I imagine the root may have suffered during the separation, though the vine will appear none the worse for it, but during the separation that particular branch will outgrow the others both in foliage and fruit. The grapes on that girdled branch can be easily picked out, as they run among the others. The bunches will be larger and handsomer, and grapes larger and they will ripen a few days earlier and be superior fruit.

Hungary's Horses for Japan.
To free themselves from their dependence on Australia for horses, the Japanese government is making large purchases of horses in Hungary.

"Heeling In" Trees.
Until each nursery bundle and stand the tree side by side in a trench deep enough to cover the roots and lower part of trunk. Incline the trees at an angle shovel in a good lot of moist earth and tramp it down. Select a sheltered, well-drained spot for this "heeling in" operation.—Farm Journal.

The president of a lumbering company in South Carolina says his company is convinced that by following the plans mapped out by the national bureau of forestry they can grow lumber at 50 cents per thousand feet.

NOT A TRACE LEFT

Rheumatism Thoroughly Cured by Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People.

There is one remedy that will cure rheumatism in any of its forms and so thoroughly eradicate the disease from the system that the cure is permanent. This remedy is Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People and the proof of the statement is found in the experience of Mr. T. S. Wagar, of No. 73 Academy street, Watertown, N. Y. He says:

"The pain was in my joints and my sufferings for over two years were beyond description. There was an intense pain in my shoulders that prevented me from sleeping and I would get up and walk the floor at night. When I began taking Dr. Williams' Pink Pills the improvement was gradual, but by the time I had taken four boxes I was entirely cured and I have not had the slightest touch of rheumatism since that time."

Mr. Wagar's wife is also enthusiastic in her endorsement of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. She says: "I have tried the pills myself for stomach trouble and have experienced great relief from their use. My daughter, Mrs. Atwood, of Gill street, Watertown, has used them for female weakness and was much benefited by them. I regard Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People as an extremely valuable family medicine."

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills have cured the worst cases of bloodlessness, indigestion, influenza, headaches, backaches, lumbago, sciatica, neuralgia, nervousness, spinal weakness, and the special ailments of girls and women whose blood supply becomes weak, scanty or irregular. The genuine Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are guaranteed to be free from opiates or any harmful drugs and cannot injure the most delicate system. At all druggists or from the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Schenectady, N. Y., postpaid, on receipt of price, 50 cents per box, six boxes for \$2.50.



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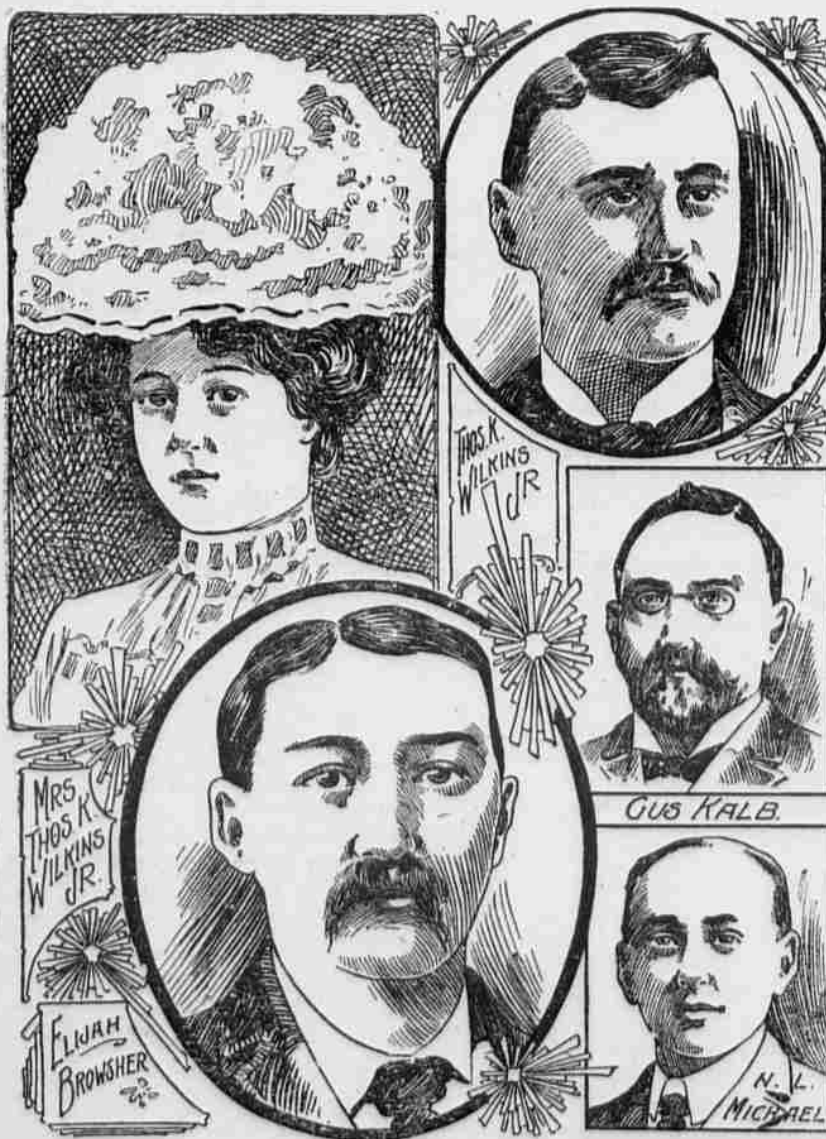
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lated. Nothing appeared to be disturbed. Yet when the inner vault was reached and the safe opened the \$18,232 placed there the Saturday night before was gone.

Who had taken it?
It seemed ridiculous to accuse Bowsheer, the janitor, of manipulating the burglar-proof locks and then placing them again in the condition they were when found.

her alimony, and denied money from Bowsheer, she resolved to tell the secret she had kept so many years.

Janitor Is Accused.

Her story was told to A. L. Freet, the deputy sheriff at Lima, who, of her own volition, she took into her confidence. She said that Bowsheer committed the robbery and that Wilkins was an accessory before and after the fact. Her story, in substance, was that Bow-